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ABSTRACT

During the 1994-95 program year, the staff of Even Start, a family literacy program in Lincoln (Nebraska), and an evaluator collaborated to create a low-stakes, small-scale portfolio assessment to collect information on program impact. The small scale of the evaluation offered opportunities to involve the staff in each step of the portfolio creation process. Lincoln's Even Start program consists of four components: adult basic education, family literacy, early childhood services, and home visits. Family literacy portfolios were planned to demonstrate changes in parent-child interactions and reading resulting from the programs and home visits. Portfolios were prepared for 35 families, 17 of which spoke a language other than English as their primary language. Scoring rubrics were developed and participant results from the Home Screening Questionnaire (C. Coons and others, 1981) were used as an indicator of the validity of portfolio scores. The assessment effort showed that it is possible to create a portfolio system that measures family growth in literacy and parent-child relationships. Implications for program evaluation and continued portfolio development are discussed. An appendix contains checklists used in portfolio development and the portfolio scoring rubric. (Contains 2 figures, 7 tables, and 11 references.) (SLD)

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Collaborating to Create a Portfolio Assessment in a Small-Scale Evaluation Context

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting
of the American Educational Research Association
New York, April 8, 1996

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INTRODUCTION

In *How Shall We Study Comprehensive, Collaborative Services for Children and Families?*, Knapp (1995) noted that the trend towards integration of education and human services poses challenges in evaluating program impact. Since collaborating agencies often operate under differing assumptions, the evaluator must fashion an evaluative framework that integrates divergent views. Knapp posited that the design of the evaluation could benefit from collaborative efforts of the evaluator, service recipients, program staff, and researchers associated with each discipline.

O'Sullivan (1995) reported that agencies are becoming more proactive in determining the evaluative framework of their programs. She noted that the evaluator's role has become increasingly collaborative as clients seek evaluative information from assessments that are more closely aligned to agency missions and goals. In addition, agencies rely on technical support from evaluators in the implementation and review of assessments. Finally, clients collaborate with evaluators to interpret assessment results and make program decisions.

The role of the evaluator has become that of a collaborator who can assist program staff in designing an assessment system that is aligned with the vision of the agency and that offers quality information for making decisions. The development of alternative assessments is technically demanding. Specifically, programs interested in a more individualized, holistic assessment are faced with the challenge of increased teacher workloads and the unreliability of scoring (Koretz, McCaffrey, Klein, Bell & Stecher, 1992). For example, reliability for scoring of portfolios in the Vermont statewide assessment ranged from .33 to .43.

The scoring of assessments -- once solely the province of the "outside, unbiased judge" -- has become increasingly collaborative as staff members become involved in scoring. In their work with a small collection of student writing portfolios, Moss and others (1992) also reported low rater reliabilities. To improve the quality of the ratings the authors proposed that the scoring of portfolios should involve those most intimately involved with the program. The state of Kentucky has involved teachers in the scoring of students' portfolios (Advanced Systems in Measurement and Evaluation, 1993). Classroom teachers scored students' portfolios and an outside agency validated the

scoring by rescoring a random sample of portfolios. Thus, collaboration is increasingly playing a role in the entire evaluative/assessment process: specification of goals/objectives, development of assessments, scoring of assessments, interpretation of results, and subsequent planning.

The use of a portfolio system of assessment for program evaluation presents the opportunity for evaluators to collaborate with clients to identify program goals, and align service delivery with those goals. In addition, a small-scale evaluation presents the opportunity for the evaluator to collaborate with staff members to develop assessments aligned with program goals and to share the research base necessary to avoid pitfalls associated with the use of alternative assessments. This interactive development and implementation of an assessment has the potential for greater program impact.

During the 1994-1995 program year, the staff of a family literacy program and an evaluator collaborated to create a low-stakes, small-scale portfolio assessment to collect information on program impact. The scale of the evaluation offered opportunities to involve the staff -- program coordinator and family educators -- in each step of the creation of the portfolio system. The purpose of this study is to describe the collaborative process and the psychometric quality of the assessment.

The Program

Even Start is a federally-funded, family literacy program. The 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Amendment provided the federal initiative for Even Start, and some of the first projects were funded in 1989. To be eligible for Even Start services the participant must be an adult/young adult in need of literacy skills who is responsible for a child age seven or younger.[1] Even Start programs provide three types of core services: adult education, parent education/child development services, and early childhood services (St. Pierre, Swartz, Murray, Deck, & Nickel, 1993). The program is mandated to be collaborative in the delivery of services and functions to coordinate services among local, state, and federal agencies to meet the needs of clients so they may pursue a literacy program. As part of these services, the program provides such support services

[1] Hereafter the term *parent* will be used to describe the person who serves as the child's parent or legal guardian.

as transportation and developmental childcare while parents attend classes to improve their literacy skills.

The Lincoln Even Start program began during the 1992-1993 school year and completed its first evaluation during the 1994-1995 program year. During the 1994-1995 program year, the Even Start program of Lincoln, Nebraska provided continuous services to forty-seven families. Twenty-six of the continuing families speak English as their primary language. Twenty-one of the families speak either Vietnamese, Russian, or Arabic as their primary language and English as a second language (ESL).

Lincoln's Even Start Program consists of four core programs: Adult Basic Education (ABE), Family Literacy, Early Childhood, and Home Visits. Parents enrolled in Even Start must make a commitment to participate in all four areas. A brief description of each component follows:

Adult Basic Education: Meeting the literacy goals of the adult is the focus of this core service. The adult participating in Even Start has a variety of options to pursue in terms of her/his literacy goals. For example, to achieve her/his literacy goals, the parent may attend a General Educational Development (GED) class or ESL class, meet with a tutor, or attend an employability program. These services are provided by collaborating agencies in the Lincoln community.

Family Literacy: In this component, the parent attends a class on how to support his/her child's development and education. As part of this component, the parent and child participate in a planned activity termed *Parent And Child Together* (PACT) that applies the ideas learned in the class to the parent's interaction with the child. These services are provided by family educators who are part of the Even Start staff.

Early Childhood: The emphasis of this core area is on meeting the child's developmental needs. During the parent's attendance at literacy classes, the child participates in a developmentally appropriate early childhood program. These service are provided by collaborating agencies in the Lincoln community. Examples of current providers of child care include licensed developmental day cares, pre-schools, Head Start programs, and Lincoln Public Schools.

Home Visits: In this component, the focus is on the parent and child in the home setting. Home visits are made by the family educator, and activities consist of adult basic education, family literacy, and/or PACT.

The Evaluation

At the national level Even Start has an information system which collects information on local programs in four areas:

1. Characteristics of local Even Start projects, including the types of projects that have been funded, the services that they provide, the collaborative efforts they have undertaken, and the obstacles that exist to program implementation;
2. Characteristics of families who participate in Even Start;
3. The type and extent of services that participating families receive;
4. The outcomes of Even Start program participation on families, parent, and children.

This information is used in the national evaluation of Even Start programs. All local Even Start programs are required to collect information in the first three areas for the evaluation. Local programs selected for the Sample Study are required to collect information about the fourth area; the Lincoln Even Start program was not included in the Sample Study. In addition to collection of the information for the national evaluation, the local Even Start staff and a member of the evaluation team identified the following evaluative questions for the 1994-1995 Even Start program:

Program description: *How do program services compare to services offered the previous year* and *How do program services compare to programs nationally?*

Adult Basic Education: *As a result of participation in the Even Start program, what changes have occurred in the parent's life skills?*

Family Literacy: *As a result of participation in the family literacy classes and home visits, what changes have occurred in parent/child interactions?*

Early Childhood: *Are child care agencies making progress toward providing more developmentally appropriate services?* and *What changes have occurred in the child as a result of participating in the Even Start program?*

Program satisfaction: *What factors contribute to a family's continued participation in the program?* and *What factors contribute to a family's decision to discontinue participation in the program?*

In the area of family literacy the director and program coordinator wanted to create an assessment that measured the degree and quality of parent and child interaction. The decision to use portfolios for this purpose was based on the alignment of the assessment with a holistic view of family literacy. It was also discussed that the development of a portfolio system could serve to inform other authentic assessment issues that were developing in Lincoln Public Schools.

For purposes of validation, information about the level of family literacy was also collected using the *Home Screening Questionnaire* (HSQ), a standardized instrument with questions about factors in the home that affect a child's development (Coons, Gay, Fandal, Ker, & Frankenburg, 1981). The *Home Screening Questionnaire* was selected for the national Sample Study to assess change in the core area of parent education/child development services; thus, the Lincoln administration of the HSQ will also allow comparisons with national results. In addition, at the end of the program year the family educators were surveyed to determine the impact of the program on activities.

METHOD

Development of the portfolio system began in December of the 1994-1995 program year. The first meeting was a half-day session to familiarize the six family educators, the program coordinator, and the evaluator with the use of portfolios as an assessment tool in family literacy. The session was led by two team leaders from the Head Start program who were using alternative assessments in their program. The session began with a general overview of assessment and moved to the use of portfolios in assessing students. Miesel's portfolio system, the *Work Sampling System*

(1993), provided an example for review. The application of portfolios to family literacy was then developed using Popp's *Family Portfolios: Documenting Change in Parent-Child Relationships* (1992). The article provided information about portfolios and posed questions that the Lincoln team would need to answer prior to implementation of its portfolio system.

A week later the team met in an all-day session to review the mission of Even Start, to establish goals related to family literacy, and to identify types of artifacts that were appropriate for the portfolio. The evaluator and program coordinator of the Even Start program led the meeting. Also contributing to this session were the Director of Federal Programs, the Administrative Assistant to the Director, and another evaluation specialist. A general review of portfolios covered the need for core items, selection of evidence to reflect typical performance, participant reflection on the artifacts, letters to the reviewers, and issues of reliability and validity. The group then moved into a discussion to resolve ten questions posed in *Family Portfolios: Documenting Change in Parent-Child Relationships* (Popp, 1992, pp. 4-18). The questions and their solutions are shown in Table 1.

The discussion of the purpose of the portfolio began with a review of the mission statement of Even Start. The mission statement of the Even Start Program in Lincoln is:

> Through the collaboration and cooperation of community agencies, the Lincoln Even Start Program provides a family centered program with primary goals to: (1) assist parents to be the primary and most significant teachers of their children; (2) assist parents to provide a family literacy environment for their children; (3) assist parents to achieve their goals related to literacy and education; (4) teach and assist parents in locating services for the health, nutrition, safety and well being of the family; and (5) assure quality education for children. **The mission of Even Start is to empower families to transfer the value of education to their children and demonstrate self-sufficiency in their complex lives** (Even Start of Lincoln, Nebraska).

Table 1
Issues Addressed in the Implementation of the Family Literacy Portfolio

What is the purpose of the portfolio?
Provide evidence of family literacy.

What physical form does the portfolio take?
For Lincoln, the portfolio is kept in a large plastic container.

What contents should be included in the portfolio?
Artifacts that provide evidence of family literacy as it relates to the Even Start goals. The variety of artifacts is flexible; they may include videos, audiotapes, pictures, and essays. Artifacts should be accompanied by written reflections about the artifact. The pre- and post-assessment using the Family Literacy Checklist should be in all portfolios.

How often should families add new materials to the portfolio?
Families should add new artifacts every two weeks. These artifacts should be reviewed on occasion and replaced with new ones. At the end of the year, each goal should have three to four artifacts that provide information about typical family performance for that goal.

Who makes the decision of what goes into the portfolio?
The parent, child, and family educator should collaborate to determine what goes into the portfolio.

Who owns the portfolio?
Until the end of the program year, the contents are owned by the family and the Even Start program.

What happens to the portfolio at the end of the year?
The family owns the contents.

Who has access to the portfolio?
The family and Even Start staff. Cooperating agencies would need to obtain written permission for review of the portfolio.

Who will assess/evaluate the portfolio contents?
Even Start staff and the evaluator.

When do portfolios need to be completed?
The first week of May.

In addition the goals and objectives of the Even Start Family Literacy component were reviewed. The goals are:

1) Build self-esteem and develop feeling of empowerment among parents and children.
2) Build on a parent's life skill ability and accomplish personal and family goal setting.
3) Build on a parent's parenting ability and help parent learn to model positive parenting skills for his/her children.
4) Increase parent's appreciation of learning and the value of education and the effect they have on her/his children's learning progress.
5) Establish and nurture feelings of connectedness and appreciation between the parent and child (Even Start of Lincoln, Nebraska) .

After reviewing the mission statement, goals, and objectives, the discussion turned to focusing the assessment in terms of selection of goals that are the core of family literacy. The family educators, program administrators, and the evaluator reached consensus in the identification of two encompassing areas which would be the focus of the portfolio assessment (see Table 2). Listed under each broad area were the family literacy skills that parents should know and practice.

In the afternoon session the team broke into groups to identify the types of artifacts which would be appropriate for inclusion in the portfolios. The formats of the artifacts proposed were videotapes, audiotapes, pictures, essays, and checklists. Tension existed between team members about the need for a standard set of core items for comparative purposes in scoring and the need for complete freedom of choice of artifacts for personalization of the portfolios. The issue was resolved by leaving the format of the artifacts open; however, the artifacts were to address the family literacy goals as identified by the group. The exception to the open format of the artifacts was in the area of the *Family Developmental Needs*. Due to the large number of objectives associated with this goal, and the importance in attaining the objectives, the team decided that the objectives associated with family developmental needs should be used

to create a checklist. The checklist would provide a pre- and post-assessment and be included in every portfolio (see checklist in Appendix).

Table 2

Areas of Focus for the Family Literacy Portfolio

	LIFE SKILLS: Parent models essential life skills for child.
Literacy:	Parent models reading/storytelling, math, and writing skills for her/his child.
Strategy Development:	Parent models for his/her child goal-setting and planning of activities.
Self-esteem:	Parent promotes self-esteem in child by providing, for example, physical contact and/or positive verbal comments.
	PARENTING: Parent uses developmentally appropriate parenting practices with child.
Parents as Teachers:	Parent functions as her/his child's teacher.
Parent/Child Interactions:	Parent and child interact in child-centered activities selected by the child.
Family Developmental Needs:	Parent creates an environment which contributes to the physical, social, and emotional well-being of her/his child.

In February the team met to share the development of the family literacy portfolios. The meeting was led by the program coordinator and the evaluator. The session began with a review of the evaluation question for which the portfolio assessment was designed: *"As a result of participation in the family literacy classes and home visits, what changes have occurred in parent/child interactions?"* Subsequently the team reviewed the list of goals and potential artifacts. Artifacts collected for the portfolios were shared by the family educators and resulted in a discussion about the need for alignment of the artifacts with the goals.

A meeting for review of portfolio collection and the development of scoring rubrics was scheduled for March. The session began with a review of portfolio collections and mapping the artifacts back to the family literacy goals. As a result of this meeting the team designed a portfolio log (see Appendix) to record the artifacts and the goal(s) for which the artifact should be reviewed. The log served two purposes: to inform the family educator about progress in each area and to inform the reviewer which artifacts may provide evidence for level of proficiency for a specific goal.

In the March meeting the family educators, program coordinator, and administrative assistant provided feedback on drafts of scoring rubrics prepared by the evaluator. An analytic rubric and a holistic rubric were developed using the family literacy goals that were the focus of the portfolios (see rubrics in Appendix). In the development of the analytic rubric, the goals were listed and descriptors written for the extremes and midpoint of a five-point scale. The descriptors for the analytic rubric were used to develop the narrative for the four levels of proficiencies -- *Proficient*, *Developing*, *Emerging*, *Not Yet* -- of the holistic rubric. Narrative was added to the holistic rubric that developed a contrast between levels. For example, in the description of the *Developing* classification the narrative reads: "The predominant characteristic that distinguishes a *Developing Level* from a *Proficient Level* in family literacy is evidence of some of the life skills and parenting skills but not all -- or most -- of the skills." The classifications represent levels of development of family literacy that range from no evidence of family literacy skills (*Not Yet*), to uneven development of those skills (*Emerging*), to development of many family literacy skills (*Developing*), to the presence of most of those skills (*Proficient*). A complete description of each level is included in the appendix .

The team first addressed which rubric -- the analytic rubric or the holistic rubric -- was appropriate for assessing the portfolios. Some members of the team indicated that the holistic rubric fit philosophically with the idea of family literacy. Other team members indicated the analytic rubric provided more information that could be used for program improvement. The issue was resolved when the team reached consensus by deciding to use a two-stage scoring system. The analytic rubric would be scored first

and be used to inform the reviewers in arriving at a final classification on the holistic rubric.

The team then turned its attention to the refinement of the rubrics. Suggestions included the refinement of language and provision of consistent language across descriptions. A final area for refinement involved establishing more distinction between levels of proficiencies. Suggestions were incorporated into the final versions of the rubrics.

At the end of the 1994-1995 program year, the team met for two days to review the rubrics, to initially score some portfolios as a group, and finally to score portfolios in pairs. Complete portfolios were available for 35 families. Seventeen of the families spoke Vietnamese, Russian, or Arabic as their primary language; and 18 of the families spoke English as their primary language.

The decision was made, based on the research of Moss and others (1992) and the scoring practices in Kentucky, that family educators, the program coordinator, and the evaluator would score portfolios to provide more program feedback to Even Start stakeholders. Earlier discussion of having parents participate in the scoring identified the problem of invasion of privacy. To reduce bias, family educators did not score the portfolios of their families; and family educators who served ESL families did not score ESL portfolios.

In preparation for scoring, in a half-day session the team reviewed the rubrics and reviewed portfolios that would provide benchmarks for the levels of literacy. During the training each member of the team scored the portfolio individually, shared her/his score with the group, and then discussed her/his ratings. In the training session, the team agreed that one portfolio was not scorable, two of the portfolios were at the *Emerging* level, one was at the *Developing* level, and one was *Proficient*. A final portfolio was scored and the ratings were all within one level of agreement.

In the remaining one and one-half days, the portfolios were scored using the two-stage scoring. Scoring was independent until the assessors had arrived at a final classification based on the holistic rubric. Once a decision was made the assessors compared the holistic score. When two raters were in exact agreement the classification they assigned was reported. In the case of raters disagreeing one level,

the intermediate classification was assigned (e.g., *Developing to Proficient*). If the holistic score differed by more than one level of classification, the portfolio was rescored by two new assessors. With one exception, score resolution for the analytic rubric followed the same procedures as the holistic rubric. In the case of the analytic rubrics when raters disagreed by more than one level, they discussed their judgments and negotiated the final score.

The *Home Screening Questionnaire* (HSQ) was selected for the national evaluation as an indicator of change in family literacy. The local program decided to use the HSQ for purposes of comparing the results for the Lincoln Even Start program with results for the nation. In addition, the HSQ would provide some indication of the validity of the portfolio assessment.

RESULTS

Consistency of Scoring

Consistency of scoring for the holistic rubrics was 93% when using the criteria that scores should be within one level of agreement (see Table 3). In the scoring session only two of the portfolios were assigned ratings that differed more than one level. When the two portfolios were rescored by new reviewers, all portfolios were with one-level of agreement, and 63% (19) of the ratings were in exact agreement. The inter-rater reliability between raters' scores on the holistic rubric was r =.66, and the inter-rater reliability of item-level scores ranged from r=.53 to r=.76.

Validity Issues

The results of the scoring are shown in Table 4. Approximately one fourth (25.7%) of the portfolios were classified as *Developing to Proficient* or *Proficient*. Nearly half (42.9%) of the participants were classified as *Emerging* and *Emerging to Developing*. None of the families were classified in the *Not Yet* group, and only one family was classified as *Not Yet to Emerging*. In written and verbal feedback, the family educators indicated that the classifications that were assigned to families with whom they worked were appropriate assessments.

Table 3

Consistency of Portfolio Scoring

	Within One level of Agreement	Exact Agreement	Inter-rater Reliability
Scores for Holistic Rubric	93%	63%	.66
Scores for Analytic Rubric			
Parent models reading/storytelling, writing, math skills for her/his child.	97%	53%	.76
Parent models for his/her child goal-setting and planning of activities.	93%	57%	.74
Parent promotes self-esteem in child by providing, for example, physical contact and/or positive verbal comments.	90%	37%	.60
Parent functions as her/his child's teacher.	93%	43%	.72
Parent and child interact in child-centered activities selected by the child.	87%	37%	.53
Parent creates an environment which contributes to the physical, social, and emotional well-being of her/his child.	93%	63%	.69

Table 4

Classifications for the Family Literacy Portfolio

Using the Holistic Rubric

	TOTAL		ESL		English-speaking	
Classification	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Proficient	3	8.6	0	0	3	16.7
Developing to Proficient	6	17.1	4	23.5	2	11.1
Developing	10	28.6	6	35.3	4	22.2
Emerging to Developing	5	14.3	2	11.8	3	16.7
Emerging	10	28.6	5	29.4	5	27.8
Not Yet to Emerging	1	2.9	0	0	1	5.6
Not Yet	0	0	0	0	0	0

When the classifications are examined by group, only English-speaking families received *Proficient* classifications. The percentage of classifications for the *Developing to Proficient* and *Proficient* categories were nearly the same for the two groups: ESL (23.5%) and English-speaking (27.8%). The *Emerging* and *Emerging to Developing* categories were also similar for the two groups: ESL (41.2%) and English-speaking (44.5%).

The results of the analytic scoring are shown in Table 5. Generally the mean score is three on a five-point scale. The highest mean score (Mean = 3.6) was for the creation of a positive environment and the lowest mean was for modeling reading, mathematics, and writing skills (Mean = 3.2). Scores on the literacy goals for English-speaking and ESL participants were similar. The internal consistency of scores for the analytic rubric, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, was .92.

Table 5

Scores for the Family Literacy Goals

Using the Analytic Rubric

	Total		ESL		English-Speaking	
Goals on Analytic Rubric	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Parent models reading/storytelling, writing, math skills for her/his child.	3.2	0.9	3.4	0.9	3.1	0.9
Parent models for his/her child goal-setting and planning of activities.	3.5	0.9	3.6	0.7	3.5	1.1
Parent promotes self-esteem in child by providing, for example, physical contact and/or positive verbal comments.	3.4	0.8	3.3	0.7	3.5	1.0
Parent functions as her/his child's teacher.	3.5	1.0	3.5	0.9	3.5	1.1
Parent and child interact in child-centered activities selected by the child.	3.3	0.7	3.4	0.7	3.2	0.8
Parent creates an environment which contributes to the physical, social, and emotional well-being of her/his child.	3.6	0.9	3.6	0.8	3.5	0.9

The results for the *Home Screening Questionnaire* are shown in Table 6. Based on a parent's responses to a series of closed-response questions and a checklist of

toys available for the child, the HSQ provides a total score which is then used to classify the home environment as *Normal* or *Suspect*. Two-thirds of the home environments of the participants were classified as *Suspect*. ESL families were classified as *Suspect* at twice the rate as the English-speaking families.

Table 6

Classifications for the Home Screening Questionnaire

	TOTAL		ESL		English-Speaking	
Classification	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Normal	7	33.3	1	10.0	6	54.5
Suspect	14	66.7	9	90.0	5	45.4

As shown in Table 7 the correlation of the raw score on the HSQ and the score for the portfolio was r = .33. In Figure 1 the moderate, positive relationship between the HSQ and portfolio assessment can be seen. The portfolio classification and the HSQ most highly correlated (r = .42) with the goal of "creates an environment which contributes to the physical, social, and emotional well-being of her/his child." The lowest correlation (r = .02) for the HSQ and the item-level portfolio scores was for the goal "functions as her/his child's teacher."

Table 7

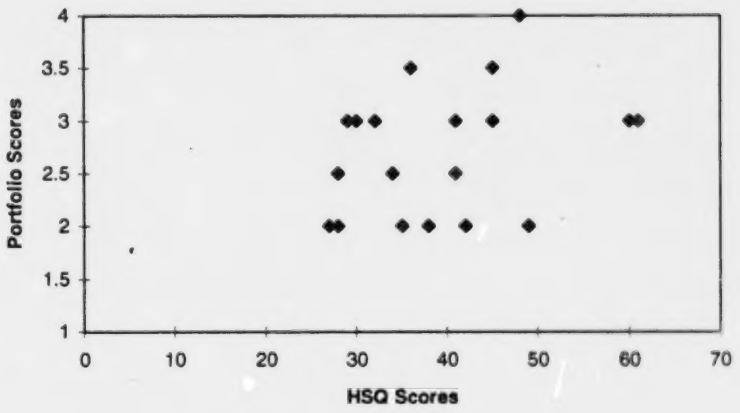
Correlations for the Portfolio Rating

and the Home Screening Questionnaire

Scores	Correlation
Holistic Rubric	.33
Analytic Rubric	
Parent models reading/storytelling, writing, math skills for her/his child.	.21
Parent models for his/her child goal-setting and planning of activities.	.29
Parent promotes self-esteem in child by providing, for example, physical contact and/or positive verbal comments.	.39
Parent functions as her/his child's teacher.	.02
Parent and child interact in child-centered activities selected by the child.	.38
Parent creates an environment which contributes to the physical, social, and emotional well-being of her/his child.	.42

Figure 2

Plot of Portfolio and HSQ Scores



Program Impact

In their responses to the survey the family educators indicated that the portfolio system promoted a closer alignment of their activities in the family literacy classes and home visits with the goals of Even Start. They also indicated that the experience provided them with a "better understanding of PACT."

Family educators also reported they found the collection of artifacts to be very demanding. They reported that much of the completion of the portfolio was family-educator driven, rather than family driven. Tension existed for the family educators between the creation of a personal portfolio and collection of core items for the purpose of evaluation. Some family educators indicated that parents were uneasy with the use of the portfolios for assessing the Even Start program; however, the subject of portfolios never arose in interviews in which families offered a wide range of likes and dislikes about the components of Even Start.

Discussion

The collaborative efforts of the Even Start staff and an evaluator resulted in a portfolio system for assessment of program impact. The efforts of the team included the identification of goals, design of the portfolio, creation of record-keeping documents, writing of rubrics, and determination of a scoring system. The efforts show it is possible

for family literacy programs to create a portfolio system to measure family growth that is intimately linked with their program's mission and goals. The link between the assessment and the program goals, and family educator's intimate involvement in the development process, clarified for them the purpose of various components of family literacy and promoted alignment of their activities with program goals.

In this small-scale evaluation, a reasonable level of consistency in scoring of the portfolios was achieved. The scoring of portfolios by those closely involved with service delivery may have improved the quality of scoring as suggested by Moss and others (1992). Much of the information about the use of portfolios has been based on large-scale assessments. The consistency may be due to the level of training offered to each rater; the small-scale evaluation allowed direct training of raters (unlike the classroom teachers in Kentucky).

To improve the consistency of scoring it will be important to create benchmarks that can be archived and used for several years. The archived benchmarks can be supplemented to provide more examples of each proficiency level, and will promote consistency across years as well as across raters. Archiving benchmarks creates a special challenge since portfolios are returned to participants at the end of the program year. The variety of formats that artifacts take (e.g., videos, audiotapes, crafts) makes duplication of materials difficult, but electronic portfolios on the market could serve to create benchmarks that could be archived.

The modest correlations between the portfolio scores and the HSQ indicate the two assessments appear to be measuring a common trait. The absence of a correlation for the two assessments in the area of the parent modeling literacy skills may indicate the portfolio measures additional traits not measured by the HSQ. In terms of assessing the program, the latter point raises the question whether the HSQ is aligned with program emphases enough to provide a valid indicator of change.

It also appears the portfolio assessment system may provide information that is less culturally-loaded than the standardized alternative. While the distribution of proficiency levels were similar for the portfolios, the *Home Screening Questionnaire* classified ESL families as *Suspect* at twice the rate as English-speaking families. It is worth restating that the portfolios of ESL families were not scored by ESL instructors,

thus, limiting any tendency to modify judgments according to familiarity. Since family educators indicated the portfolio classifications reflected the levels of family literacy in their families, the validity of the HSQ as a measure of family literacy for ESL families becomes questionable.

The validity of the HSQ as an indicator of family literacy for ESL families arose as a result of the collaboration between family educators and the evaluator. As a result of family educators sensitizing of the evaluator to the issues faced by the ESL families the design of the evaluation reviewed program impact for ESL and English-speaking families. The evaluation results were reported in disaggregated form and the differential impact of the HSQ became evident.

If the portfolio assessment is to continue, however, family educators will need to gain additional skills in the management of portfolios and how to involve the Even Start participants in the creation of the portfolios. Linkage between the literacy activities and the portfolio has not been established as evidenced in one family educator's statement that the most frustrating aspect of the portfolio system is: "The enormous amount of time the portfolio system took away from my own planning time and my time to work with the family on the ABE component, Family Literacy component, and PACT time during home visits." That family educators do not see the creation of the portfolio as a collaboration is reflected in the comment: "Families take responsibility, ownership -- portfolio not completed they should be held responsible."

Even though the portfolio assessment is perceived as more demanding, when viewed from Messick's consequential validity perspective (1989), the differential impact of the HSQ and the portfolio system of assessment on the classification of ESL households as *Suspect*, warrant further review to determine the appropriate method for assessing family literacy--at the local level or national level. If a portfolio assessment is to be successful, staff members will need to perceive in an integrated fashion the goals of the program, their instruction/activities, and the construction of the portfolio. These are the challenges faced by the Even Start assessment in its second year.

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Appendix

Areas of Focus for the Family Literacy Portfolio

Two areas of focus were selected to guide the selection of core items for the Family Literacy portfolios. The two standards selected for the focus of the portfolio collection -- Life Skills and Parenting -- are listed below. Benchmarks are listed as headings underneath each standard. Listed under each benchmark are the types of indicators/evidence to be collected for the portfolios.

To create a complete portfolio, an example of each indicator should be collected each month. By the end of the year, three to four examples, for each benchmark should be in each family's portfolio. The examples should reflect *typical* performance. The core items serve to provide a common basis for comparison; parents, children, and family educators are encouraged to include other materials that will present the unique story of a family's development.

LIFE SKILLS: Parent models essential life skills for child.

Literacy: Parent models reading/storytelling, math, and writing skills for her/his child.

- Writing samples
- Frequency of reading to child

Strategy Development: Parent models for his/her child goal-setting and planning of activities.

- Goal setting activities
- Parent planning activities

Self-esteem: Parent promotes self-esteem in child by providing, for example, physical contact and/or positive verbal comments.

- Frequency of giving encouragement

PARENTING: Parent uses developmentally appropriate parenting practices with child.

Parents as Teachers: Parent functions as her/his child's teacher.

- Video/audio
- List of activities

Parent/Child Interactions: Parent and child interact in child-centered activities selected by the child.

- Symbols of PACT w/ written reflections
- Video/audio
- Narrative summary of PACT activities

Family Developmental Needs: Parent creates an environment which contributes to the physical, social, and emotional well-being of her/his child.

- Family literacy checklist
- Height/weight charts

Portfolio Log

The portfolio log is to be used to indicate which artifacts should be reviewed as evidence for performance in the areas of family literacy. It also provides information about areas that have been addressed and areas that may need focus. In the left hand column write the name and number of the artifact. In the columns to the right, place an X under each area that should be reviewed when considering evidence of family literacy. Some artifacts may provide evidence under more than one area of family literacy. An example has been completed for you.

Item/Artifact	Date	Age of Child	Literacy	Strategy Development	Self-Esteem	Parents as Teachers	Parent/Child Interactions	Family Developmental Needs
Photo of mother reading to child	12/11/95	3 yr.	X		X	X	X	

Family Literacy Checklist

Parent Copy

Name of family _____ Date _____

Parent _____

Listed below are four general areas that contribute to family literacy. Listed below each area are skills that are part of family literacy. Please think about how often you do the skills with your child and place a check under the appropriate column for each of the skills. Place a check under the column titled *Regularly* if you often practice the skill with your child. Place a check under the column titled *Occasionally* if you practice this skill only once in a while. Place a check under the column titled *Not Often* if you rarely practice this skill.

Creating a learning environment	*Regularly*[1]	*Occasionally*[2]	*Not Often*[3]
Talks with child, describing child's actions	___	___	___
Asks open-ended questions of child	___	___	___
Observes child's behavior to determine abilities and needs	___	___	___
Listens to child talk	___	___	___
Reads to child	___	___	___

Meeting physical needs	*Regularly*[1]	*Occasionally*[2]	*Not Often*[3]
Meets child's nutritional needs	___	___	___
Meets child's health needs, including exercise	___	___	___
Meets child's safety needs	___	___	___
Meets child's clothing and shelter needs	___	___	___

Continue to the next page

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Providing a nurturing environment	*Regularly*[1]	*Occasionally*[2]	*Not Often*[3]
Displays verbal or physical affection to child	___	___	___
Provides positive encouragement to child	___	___	___
Supports child's independence	___	___	___
Responds positively to child's needs	___	___	___
Communicates acceptance of child	___	___	___

Providing guidance	*Regularly*[1]	*Occasionally*[2]	*Not Often*[3]
Exhibits positive modeling of desired behavior	___	___	___
Sets age-appropriate limits	___	___	___
Provides natural and/or logical consequences	___	___	___
Offers appropriate choices	___	___	___
Encourages positive behavior	___	___	___
Explains rules	___	___	___

Parent Comments:

[1] Does skill regularly
[2] Does skill occasionally
[3] Does skill rarely

Family Literacy Checklist

Family Educator Copy

Name of family _____ Date _____

Family educator _____

Listed below are four general areas that contribute to family literacy. Listed below each area are skills that are indicators of family literacy. Based on your observations over a two or three week period, place a check under the appropriate column for each of the skills. Place a check under the column titled *Regularly* if the parent often demonstrates the skill with her/his child. Place a check under the column titled *Occasionally* if the parent demonstrates this skill only once in a while. If you have not yet observed the parent demonstrating the skills, place a check under the column titled *Not Observed*.

Creating a learning environment	*Regularly*[1]	*Occasionally*[2]	*Not Observed*[3]
Talks with child, describing child's actions	___	___	___
Asks open-ended questions of child	___	___	___
Observes child's behavior to determine abilities and needs	___	___	___
Listens to child talk	___	___	___
Reads to child	___	___	___

Meeting physical needs	*Regularly*[1]	*Occasionally*[2]	*Not Observed*[3]
Meets child's nutritional needs	___	___	___
Meets child's health needs, including exercise	___	___	___
Meets child's safety needs	___	___	___
Meets child's clothing and shelter needs	___	___	___

Continue to the next page

Providing a nurturing environment	*Regularly*[1]	*Occasionally*[2]	*Not Observed*[3]
Displays verbal or physical affection to child	___	___	___
Provides positive encouragement to child	___	___	___
Supports child's independence	___	___	___
Responds positively to child's needs	___	___	___
Communicates acceptance of child	___	___	___

Providing guidance	*Regularly*[1]	*Occasionally*[2]	*Not Observed*[3]
Exhibits positive modeling of desired behavior	___	___	___
Sets age-appropriate limits	___	___	___
Provides natural and/or logical consequences	___	___	___
Offers appropriate choices	___	___	___
Encourages positive behavior	___	___	___
Explains rules	___	___	___

Family Educator Comments:

[1] Demonstrates skill regularly
[2] Demonstrates skill occasionally
[3] Not observed

FAMILY LITERACY PORTFOLIO SCORING RUBRIC

Case number _____

Rater _____

Date _____

Level

___ Proficient
___ Developing
___ Emerging
___ Not yet
___ Not scorable

Life Skills

Parent models reading/storytelling, writing, math skills for her/his child.

1	2	3	4	5	_____
Portfolio content reflects little modeling of reading, math, and writing skills		Portfolio content reflects some modeling of reading, math, and writing skills		Portfolio is characterized by modeling of reading, math, and writing skills	No evidence

Parent models for his/her child goal-setting and planning of activities.

1	2	3	4	5	_____
Portfolio content reflects little modeling of goal-setting and planning of activities.		Portfolio content reflects some modeling of goal-setting and planning of activities.		Portfolio is characterized by modeling of goal-setting and planning of activities.	No evidence

Parenting Skills

Parent promotes self-esteem in child by providing, for example, physical contact and/or positive verbal comments.

1	2	3	4	5	_____
Portfolio content reflects little attention to the development of positive self-esteem.		Portfolio content reflects some attention to the development of positive self-esteem.		Portfolio is characterized by a high level of attention to the development of positive self-esteem.	No evidence

Parent functions as her/his child's teacher.

1	2	3	4	5	_____
Portfolio content shows few activities with the parent teaching her/his child.		Portfolio content shows some activities with the parent teaching her/his child.		Portfolio is characterized by the parent typically functioning as a teacher to his/her child.	No evidence

Parent and child interact in child-centered activities selected by the child.

1	2	3	4	5	_____
Portfolio content shows little parent and child interaction in activities which are selected by the child.		Portfolio content shows some parent and child interactions in activities which are selected by the child.		Portfolio is characterized by the parent and child interactions in activities which are selected by the child.	No evidence

Parent creates an environment which contributes to the physical, social, and emotional well-being of her/his child.

1	2	3	4	5	_____
Portfolio content reflects an environment that contributes little to the physical, social, and emotional well-being of a child.		Portfolio content reflects an environment that contributes somewhat to either the physical, social, or emotional well-being of a child.		Portfolio is characterized by an environment that contributes to the physical, social, and emotional well-being of a child.	No evidence

Use the area below to make comments about evidence for decisions on Life Skills and Parenting Skills.

Comments:

FAMILY LITERACY PORTFOLIO SCORING RUBRIC

Proficient

The family-literacy portfolio provides a holistic picture of a family that demonstrates a high level of essential life skills and parenting skills. The artifacts contained within the portfolio characterize a parent who models for her/his child many essential life skills: literacy, strategy development, and promotion of positive self-esteem. Entries demonstrate that the parent models many literacy skills in reading, math, writing, and strategy development in goal-setting and planning of activities for her/his child. The content of the portfolio also reflects a high level of attention to the development of positive self-esteem in the child.

Also, the artifacts contained within the portfolio reflect many parenting practices that are developmentally appropriate for the child. Activities within the portfolio demonstrate the parent functions as her/his child's teacher. The content of the portfolio shows a high level of parent and child engaging in child-centered activities selected by the child. The entries in the portfolio characterize a parent who creates an environment which contributes to the physical, social, and emotional needs of the child.

Developing

The family-literacy portfolio provides a holistic picture of a family that is developing some essential life skills and parenting skills. The predominant characteristic that distinguishes a *Developing Level* from a *Proficient Level* in family literacy is evidence of some of the life skills and parenting skills but not all -- or most -- of the skills. The *Developing Level* may also reflect a high level of attention to some aspects of family literacy while other life skills and parent skills are not demonstrated in the portfolio.

The artifacts contained within the portfolio characterize a parent who models for her/his child some of the essential life skills: literacy, strategy development, and promotion of positive self-esteem. Entries demonstrate that the parent models some literacy skills in reading, math, writing, and strategy development in goal-setting and planning of activities for her/his child. The content of the portfolio also reflects some attention to the development of positive self-esteem in the child.

The artifacts contained within the portfolio reflect some parenting practices that are developmentally appropriate for the child. Activities within the portfolio demonstrate the may parent function as her/his child's teacher. The content of the portfolio may show parent and child engaging in child-centered activities selected by the child. The entries in the portfolio may characterize a parent who creates an environment which contributes to the physical, social, and emotional needs of the child.

Emerging

The family-literacy portfolio provides a holistic picture of a family in which a few of the essential life skills and parenting skills are emergent. The predominant characteristic that distinguishes an *Emerging level* from a *Developing level* in family literacy is evidence of a few of the life skills and parenting skills but not many of the skills. The portfolio is characterized by beginning development of one or two of the life skills and parenting skills that describe a high level of family literacy; however, development of many of the life skills and parent skills are not demonstrated in the portfolio.

The artifacts contained within the portfolio characterize a parent who attempts to model for her/his child one or two of the essential life skills: literacy, strategy development, and promotion of positive self-esteem. Entries demonstrate that the parent is beginning to model a few literacy skills in reading, math, writing, and strategy development in goal-setting and planning of activities for her/his child. The content of the portfolio also reflects limited attention to the development of a positive self-esteem in the child.

The artifacts contained within the portfolio reflect attempts at a limited number of parenting practices that are developmentally appropriate for the child. Activities within the portfolio demonstrate the parent has begun to function as her/his child's teacher. The content of the portfolio may show parent and child beginning to engage in child-centered activities selected by the child. The entries in the portfolio may characterize a parent who has started to create an environment which contributes to the physical, social, and emotional needs of the child.

Not yet

The family-literacy portfolio provides a holistic picture of a family that has not yet developed essential life skills and parenting skills. The predominant characteristic that distinguishes a *Not-Yet Level* from an *Emergent Level* in family literacy is the artifacts within the portfolio lack overall evidence of any of the life skills and parenting skills. The portfolio is characterized by an absence of the life skills and parenting skills that describe a high level of family literacy. The portfolio may also demonstrate an area in such great need of development that while the parent demonstrates some literacy and family skills, the area in need of development is of greater consequence.

The artifacts contained within the portfolio characterize a parent who does not model for her/his child essential life skills: literacy, strategy development, and promotion of positive self-esteem. Entries demonstrate that the parent does not model literacy skills in reading, math, writing, and strategy development in goal-setting and planning of activities for her/his child. The content of the portfolio also reflects no attention to the development of positive self-esteem in the child.

The artifacts contained within the portfolio reflect parenting practices that may not be developmentally appropriate for the child. Activities within the portfolio demonstrate the parent does not function as her/his child's teacher. The content of the portfolio shows parent and child typically not interacting or primarily engaging in adult-centered activities selected by the parent. The entries in the portfolio characterize a parent who has not created an environment which contributes to the physical, social, and emotional needs of the child.

Not scorable

The family literacy portfolio is not scorable if the family has been in the family literacy program for less than three months. In addition, the portfolio is not scorable if it lacks artifacts which provide evidence of family literacy in life skills and parenting skills. It is possible that there are few artifacts of any type contained within the portfolio. It is also possible that the artifacts contained within the portfolio do not provide sufficient information to tell whether a family is at the *Not-yet Level*, the *Emergent Level*, *Developing Level*, or the *Proficient Level*; and, thus, the portfolio could not be scored.